Principal’s Report – Annual Community Meeting

Monday 25th November 2013

OLMC VISION STATEMENT

“Here at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, we seek to create a respectful environment, that enhances learning, nurtures our young, and empowers our whole school community to authentically live out the faith that we proclaim.”

Good evening and welcome. I am pleased to present this report this evening as we move towards the conclusion of my first year as Principal of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School.

Tonight we come together as a school community to reflect on the year that has been, to appoint a new Parents and Friends Executive, to listen to reports from the leaders of our Parish and Parent Groups in our school and to recognise the contributions of individuals and groups that exist within our community.

We in Catholic Schools walk in the footsteps of giants. With the exception of foundation schools, students, staff, principals and parents follow and continue the legacy of those who came before them. So I stand before you tonight, respectful of those founding Sisters and those who built the foundations of the community in which we all stand today. I would also recognise the sound and thorough planning of previous Principals and School Boards, who have planned for, and provided the facilities and resources our current students, staff and families enjoy today.

OLMC School commenced the school year with approximately 236 students and 142 families. We welcomed several new families during the course of the year and especially welcomed our 29 Kindy students who commenced their school education at OLMC School this year.

As a Catholic Parish school, our school is here because of God, and it is here for children. We are indeed an arm of the church and hold on strongly to that connection along with the spiritual, sacramental and faith dimensions that are so critical to our existence. In 2013 we have continued to receive inquiries and requests for enrolment with most classes being full and waiting lists required. Our reputation as a school of choice remains strong!
The new Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia often talks about his aspiration for us to be a ‘flourishing system’. It has been my observation that as a part of that broader system, this is also a challenge and aspiration for us at OLMC School. As a flourishing educational community we are continually reminded to keep the child at the centre of all we do. I believe we continue to be a school, that remains both child and Christ centred.

During the last twelve months I have been privy to many examples of this. Our boys and girls have provided us with many opportunities in 2013 to be proud; proud of who they are; proud of where they have come from; proud of what they have achieved. The educational, spiritual and physical development of each individual and as class cohorts would provide further testament to this. We as educators are indeed blessed to witness and play our part in continuing the work you have commenced and continue to do at home. As the first educators, I acknowledge and thank the parent community for your efforts not only in this role, but also for your contributions and strong partnerships that you have forged with the staff and school.

It is indeed when this strong partnership between school and home occurs that we truly optimise our student’s full potential.

I would now like to acknowledge, what I perceive to be some of the highlights of 2013.

2013 Teaching and Learning Highlights

- The Mini Lit and Multi Lit Programmes being offered as a means of student intervention, and subsequent student improvement (this intervention has provided).
- The continued development of Maths Clubs.
- The Learning Journey that occurred in Term 3.
- The continued teaching of Science as a Specialist Subject
- The whole school History Unit undertaken by all classes in Term 3
- The continued implementation of ICT’s across the curriculum and the use of Ipad and Apple TV (K-6) to assist student learning and engagement.

2013 Faith Life

- Staff Commissioning Mass in Term 1
- Parish Sacraments
- Archbishop Timothy Costelloe’s visit and Confirmation
- Community Masses
- Making Jesus Real (not a programme, but a way of life!) Peter Mitchell’s visit and workshop with staff and students in Term 2.
2013 Extra Curricular Highlights

- The schools NAIDOC Celebrations
- The Schools faction swimming and athletics carnivals
- OLMC Week celebrations
- The Year 5/6 Lightning Carnival
- Our continued involvement and Community Service through Carmel Care e.g. Homeless Sleepover.
- Hosting the regional Chess Tournament
- Year 6 Camp – Bickley

2013 Community Highlights

- The School and Parish Fete
- The Ladies Fashion Parade
- The 80’s Trivia Night
- Father and Son African Drumming Night
- World Teacher’s Day Celebrations
- The great variety of parent engagement/education opportunities.

Insight Survey Summary 2013

In 2013, 60 families were randomly selected to complete the Insight SRC Surveys. A total of 33 families returned their surveys to be interpreted.

A total of 47 students and 22 staff also completed the survey which provided us with valuable data. The following brief summary captures both the strengths and opportunities this data provides us.

OLMC Strengths

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<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<td>Feel that behaviour management is managed well and teachers are enthusiastic and passionate.</td>
<td>A very high morale and connectedness to school. Feel there is purposeful teaching with lessons delivered in a planned and energetic manner.</td>
<td>Staff are intrinsically on board with the goals and objectives of the school. Ownership is built through the level of teamwork and empowerment.</td>
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OLMC Growth Opportunities

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<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<td>More positive relationship building to be promoted amongst students.</td>
<td>To be more engaged with their learning and motivated to achieve at school.</td>
<td>Focus on student motivation and engagement to affect student achievement.</td>
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The Catholic Education Office has advised that effective immediately, the surveys will be called ‘School Climate Survey’. This will be conducted every second year as of 2014.

**Quality Catholic Schooling 2013**

This year OLMC School continued its journey using the Quality Catholic Schooling Component Reviews, as a means of whole school improvement.

**1.01 Vision and Mission; 3.01 Vision for Learning; 3.04 Teaching Practices; and 3.12 Student Engagement and 4.01 Professional Learning were the components covered this year.**

These reviews coordinated by Assistant Principal, Rosemary Paparella and involving input, leadership and participation by all staff, provided us with a framework and list of achievable and realistic aspirations to reflect on and guide our ongoing commitment towards school improvement for this year and beyond.

**Appreciation and Acknowledgement**

Upon my appointment as principal last year, I was told that OLMC School was like a country school. I wasn’t sure what this meant initially, but noted it had been stated by both a former OLMC Principal and indeed some parents. I learnt quickly this year that the notion of ‘a country school in the city’ was really more to do about the community spirit. I remember Mrs Anne Aquino talking about the notion of the school being like a village, and have developed a much clearer appreciation of this metaphor as the year has transgressed. The essence of any community is its members. I would like to recognise the significance of the many groups and indeed volunteers that ensure OLMC School remains the collaborative community it is.

**School Volunteers**

On behalf of the community, and myself personally, I wish to acknowledge and thank, Sharon Berkovic – for her work as book club coordinator; Sharon McGunnigle for her work as uniform shop manager; Veronica Vinci for her work with the uniform shop, Yvette Kelly for her work alongside Rebecca Rowland (School Counsellor) in organising so many guest speakers and parent education/engagement opportunities; Mary Kinsella for her passion and commitment to maintaining the profile of Carmel Care in our school; Ana Frendo-Menendez for her contributions and support of Tanya Pisano in the school library; Eliza Gonsalves for her support of Anna Cortese in the Canteen; Angeline Gavranic with the school banking; **This year, the staff will be hosting a special volunteers morning tea on Monday 9th December.** This will be our opportunity to thank not just the above mentioned, but also those not parents and volunteers who have assisted in our school e.g. reading roster, swim club, laundry roster, coached a team, set a sports day, assembled a table, attended an excursion, helped at the fete etc, etc.

**Parish Priest – Father Paul Raj**

A special thank you for all that you have brought to our school. Your faith and spiritual leadership is highly valued by the school, parish and wider community.
Thanks for your ever accommodating presence, celebration of liturgies, preparation of sacraments and support of the School Leadership Team and Staff. Your involvement and presence in the wider community and work on the School Board are also noted. I can honestly say I’ve never worked in a school where the Parish Priest has offered to go on the ‘Dunking Machine’ at a Fete as Fr Paul did at this year!

The School Board
In 2013 the School Board, continued to play an instrumental role in assisting the School Leadership Team in ensuring our school is well placed for the future. Strategic planning, financial management, and ‘visioning for the current and future generations’ of OLMC School, are just some of the functions of the School Board.

I wish to thank Mario Pisano in his role as Board Chairman. To Fiona Ryan in her role as Treasurer, Trevor Servaas in his role as Secretary, Matt Buggins in his role as Parents and Friends Association Representative, Megan Mentz in her role as Parish Representative, Fr Paul Raj as our Parish Priest and to fellow Board Member’s Jason Gavranic, Maria Cadzow and Aaron Crees thank you for your contributions this year.

I wish to acknowledge and thank Mario Pisano who will conclude his service at the conclusion of the year, initially as Board member, and more recently as Board Chairman. I have appreciated and valued your professionalism, wisdom and commitment to the OLMC School community during this last twelve months. I would also like to thank and acknowledge Trevor Servaas for his role this year as Secretary and previous years of Board service.

The Parents and Friends Association
A huge thank you to Matt Buggins, Parents and Friends Association President. To the Executive; Treasurer – Brian Gough, Secretary – Natalie Giles, Fundraising Coordinator – Samantha Kerlin. I would like to thank and acknowledge the outgoing President Matt Buggins and Treasurer Brian Gough for their years of service and contribution to this parent engagement body in both their current roles and previous roles. I would also like to thank Sam for her role as Fundraising Coordinator and the amazing amount of work that went into this year’s Fete.

Thanks also to our 2013 Parent Representatives. Your job of communicating to families and support of Parents and Friends Association initiatives is a great attribute of our school.

I have been most impressed with the engagement opportunities afforded to our students and families in 2013, and wish our newly elected President and Executive luck as they continue this legacy and community engagement opportunities our Parents and Friends provides into the future.
I would take this opportunity to promote participation and involvement in this group for next year. We are always on the lookout for new members and contributors to this important parent organisation.

**The Staff**

It has been said that ‘a team is only as strong as its weakest link’; I am pleased to report, I was most blessed to have inherited a team without any weak links.

This year the OLMC staff welcomed Pauline Walshe, Emily Grieves, Louise Corkhill, Amanda Archibald, Jessica Cullen (New Position) as well as myself.

I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the significance of Louise Corkhill and Jessica Cullen who both commenced their teaching professions as graduates this year. Well done ladies.

I wish to personally and publically acknowledge the professionalism, dedication and work ethic of all OLMC staff members.

To our **Teaching Staff**, Louise, Amy, Jessica C, Nicole, Bruna, Mimma, Emily, Helen, Jessica H, Cecilia, Lisa, Bozana, Sue, Rosemary, Bianca, John, Robert and Nora. We thank them for their work as classroom and specialist teachers this year.

To our **Educational Assistants**, Vittoria, Sandra, Amanda, Lee, Fatima, Mary and Pauline thank you for your support, dedication and care of the students you serve.

To our **Support Staff**, Anna, Rebecca, Julio, Kathy, Tanya, Marta, and Linda, thank you also for your ongoing contributions you each make to OLMC School.

On a personal note I wish to also recognise Jessica Harrison on her marriage this year and Amy and Lisa (and their respective husbands) on the excitement surrounding the pending birth of their babies in 2014.

I believe all our staff are respected and valued by our community and appreciate that this has been well earned through their hard work and commitment to the students and families they serve. I trust in moving forward, that this will remain a feature of our 2014 team.

At the end of this year we will farewell the following staff members. I would ask each of them to come forward to receive a small sign of our community’s recognition for their service and commitment to OLMC School.
- Mrs Nora Watson (Kindy) who has decided not to return to OLMC due to family circumstance.
- Mrs Amanda Archibald (Kindy EA Term 4) who will continue working in Catholic Education much closer to home at Hammond Park Catholic School.
- Mrs Lisa Johnson (Year 1) who will become a mum for the first time early in 2014.
- Miss Emily Grieves (Year 5) who will be travelling the world in 2014.
- Miss Louise Corkhill (Performing Arts Specialist) who will continue her teaching journey elsewhere in 2014.

We also note Miss Bianca Proctor who departed for an overseas adventure at the conclusion of Term 2.

Mrs Kathy Sargent (Finance Officer) has decided to retire after serving Catholic Schools for many years. Kathy’s position in the school is probably one of the most complex and isolating. Her professionalism and commitment to her position, has ensured our school finds itself in the positive financial position we are in today. Thanks Kathy for your support and guidance this year. I trust the planned adventures for your retirement years are all you have dreamt and worked for.

Mrs Rosemary Paparella has been appointed to the position of Assistant Principal at Yiddarra Catholic Primary School in 2014. Rosemary has been a loyal servant and leader in Catholic Schools for many years. She leaves OLMC School having been the stable influence of a Leadership Team that has included two principals and an acting principal during the last three years. We recognise and thank Rosemary’s professionalism, dedication and pastoral care (staff, students and families) during the last 3 and half years.

We also acknowledge Mr John Rijs (12 Months Leave) and Mrs Amy Cox (Term 1-3 2014 Maternity Leave)

The 2013 school year, has been a year of great personal learning and satisfaction as I have commenced my time as Principal of OLMC School. We have much to be thankful for as a school community, and much to look forward to as we embark upon the 2014 school year.

Thank you staff, parents and wider community members for your attendance and support of this evening’s Annual Community Meeting – I wish you and your families a happy and peaceful Christmas season.

Kevin Duffy | Principal | 2013